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Digital Internship Model for Higher Professional Studies

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PEER REVIEW OF METHODOLOGY FOR DIGITAL INTERNSHIP IN PROFESSIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION

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PROJECT AND DOCUMENT INFORMATION

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VERSIONING AND CONTRIBUTION HISTORY

Version	Date	Status	Partner (Person) Responsible
v.01	15/10/2021	Draft	WSAAS (Vesna Marjanovic)
v.02			

The report provides a comprehensive list of activities carried out in intellectual output 1, so-called, Methodology for Digital Internship in Professional Higher Education, of the Project with Number:2020-1-RS01-KA226-HE-094527 called Digital Internship Model for Higher Professional Studies (DIMPS). The quality of this activities is good.

Digital Internship Model for Higher Professional Studies is the fusion of three major actors: student, higher education institution and employer.

The digital/virtual internship model, suitable for the internship in different economy sectors, including the technical sector and tourism, is directed at finding solutions to the problem of transferring field-specific formal requirements and learning outcomes into the digital format.

Virtual internships enable students to gain real-world experience in a remote online setting and offer advantages over traditional internship programs, such as the inclusion of students who cannot participate in traditional internships due to financial, geographical reasons, disabilities or other reasons. In addition virtual internships allow low-cost student exchanges and provide them constructive communication and interaction although they are geographically separated and/or from different cultural backgrounds.

The structure and minimum duration of an internship with specificities for each scientific field are defined by the study program accreditation standards in compliance with the national legislation, while for the enterprise internships are regulated by the national labour legislations as well as in terms of occupational safety and health. A virtual internship involves the use of an information and communication technology supported environment, where students, higher education institution and employer representatives, in order to carry out a specific and meaningful work-based activity that fits within the student's compulsory educational curriculum. There are a lot of benefits that higher education institutions and students gain from applying a virtual internship include, such as providing a way to develop new students competences, providing a professional way to build partnerships between the business world and educational systems, ensuring regional mobility (without the need to move), etc. But also employers have a lot of benefits gain from applying a virtual internship include, such as: reducing the dependency on the labor supply of a particular area, overcoming geographical limitations (companies do not need to relocate the student, he/she can remain at home), the firm can save money, etc.

Methodology for Digital Internship in Professional Higher Education also envisages the conditions required to be met by virtual practice and compared these conditions with the conditions met by the on-site internship. Some of these conditions are the internship position must

give students the opportunity: to participate in the work process, to perform work at the level of the study program, to perform work related to the knowledge and/or skills acquired during his/her study, to reflect on the internship and to write an internship report. Also, the skills or knowledge acquired have to be transferable to other employment settings.

Virtual internship learning outcomes, general and program-specific, differ depending on the educational level and year of study and criteria for ECTS credit assignment are clearly defined. It is assumed that the virtual internship will be successfully realized if the student, higher education institution and employer enter their expectations and requirements for the period before, during and after the internship in a list (of expectations and requirements) given in the Methodology. The DIMPS platform virtual internship may be can be connected or integrated in both directions with other specialized e-learning platforms that complement virtual internships user experience. A detailed plan of the necessary steps to be taken by students, the higher education institution and the employer, during the different phases of the internship implementation is proposed in case the process is started by the higher education institution (thus being compulsory internship and awarded a number of ECTS credits). For each of these steps, the preparation of documentation is planned, by filling in the appropriate forms, which are attached to the Methodology for Digital Internship in Professional Higher Education. It was noted that the plan could be adapted to situations where the process is initiated by a student or employer.

The virtual internship platform provides support to some form of virtual work placement with a foreign company. Virtual work placements enable students to take on work placements abroad without having to leave their home country and they are beneficial for students, for higher education institutions and for employers.